

---

# 5A

## Information/Action

### *Credentialing and Certificated Assignments Committee*

#### **Implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) in California**

---

**Executive Summary:** This agenda item provides background information on Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) from both a national and state level perspective and a discussion of staffing challenges related to the implementation of locally designed RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models in public schools of California.

**Policy Questions:** Is there a need to further examine the Education Specialist Credential preparation program and authorization structure to meet the needs of the student population served in locally designed RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models in California?

**Recommended Action:** Staff requests further direction on the policy questions outlined for current guidance on staffing options, the possibility of an added authorization for an Education Specialist to serve general education students within RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models, and future special education teacher preparation and authorization structures.

**Presenter:** Roxann L. Purdue, Consultant, Certification, Assignment and Waivers Division

#### **Strategic Plan Goal**

##### ***I. Educator Quality***

- ◆ Ensure that credential processing and assignment monitoring activities accurately, effectively, and efficiently identify educators who have met high and rigorous certification standards and who are appropriately assigned.

December 2012

---

# Implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) in California

---

## Introduction

This agenda item presents background information on Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) and builds on the information presented in the webcast, *Foundations of Special Education Certification in California* ([http://video.ctc.ca.gov/2012-11-20-Special Education Webcast](http://video.ctc.ca.gov/2012-11-20-Special%20Education%20Webcast))<sup>i</sup>. From both a national and state level perspective, RtI<sup>2</sup> is more frequently being referenced as a process that serves as a foundational frame for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). In addition, this item continues the discussion of staffing challenges related to the implementation of locally designed RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models in California's public schools from the January 2011 Commission meeting (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2011-01/2011-01-2E.pdf>).

Staff at the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) and California Department of Education (CDE) have been working collaboratively to address staffing issues related to locally designed RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models. Through discussion with local school districts, county offices, and Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) representatives, Commission staff have also had opportunities to further understand the wide variety of local approaches in designing and implementing RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models in California. As a result of these discussions, Commission staff partnered with CDE in sponsoring a joint survey in collaboration with the California Comprehensive Center at WestEd regarding local level implementation of RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS in California. As part of the discussion on this item, staff from WestEd will provide some preliminary results from this statewide survey.

This item also presents several policy questions for Commission consideration regarding current assignment options for holders of Education Specialist Credentials serving in these locally designed tiered models as well as future options related to credential and authorization structures for special education teachers and their preparation for serving general education students without an Individual Education Program (IEP) within these models.

## Background

Response to Instruction (RtI) is a data-based decision making process that serves as the foundational frame for a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for students who are struggling academically or with behavior. MTSS describes the types of tiered instruction and intervention provided to students in the various tiers within the RtI framework. RtI is supported at the national level by the U.S. Department of Education (<http://www.rti4success.org/>) and other agencies (e.g., RTI Action Network, <http://www.rtinetwork.org/about-us/position-statement>). Students' progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education, in special education, or both.<sup>ii</sup> The National Center for Response to Intervention identifies RtI as an approach that

integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. With RtI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities.<sup>iii</sup> The National Center on Response to Intervention provides an overview of the essential components of RtI (Multi-Level Prevention Systems, Universal Screening, Progress Monitoring, and Data-Based Decision Making) in a brief webinar (<http://www.rti4success.org/webinars/video/927/>).

*At the national level, RtI is suggested in both general and special education regulations. According to Batsche et al. (2006) RtI practices have been allowable under federal law since the enactment of P.L., 94-142. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004 contains the provision to use scientific, research-based interventions as part of the process to determine eligibility for learning disabilities. However, the purpose of the national framework is much more significant than eligibility alone.*

*Federal law requires states to adopt policies “designed to prevent the inappropriate over identification of disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities” 612(a)(24). The law maintains, “A child must not be determined to be a child with a disability...if the determinant factor for that determination is...lack of appropriate instruction in reading (or) math” 34 CFR 300.306.<sup>iv</sup>*

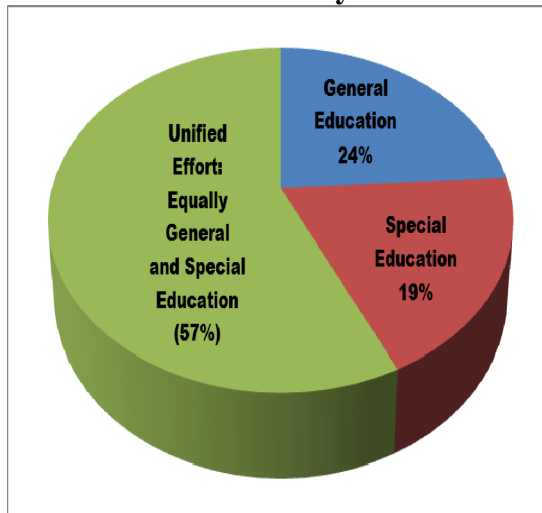
It is important to note that implementation of RtI varies in each state and, for California, within each district. A 2011 *national* web-based survey (<http://www.spectrumk12.com/rti>) was recently released providing information on how widely RtI has been adopted and implemented in U.S. school districts. The survey results from 1,390 respondents nationwide demonstrate both trends and differences in implementation throughout the nation. The majority of schools (94%) were engaged in some stage of RtI implementation but only 24% of those respondents had reached full implementation. Of those schools currently planning or implementing RtI, elementary schools lead the way, with 80% of respondents reporting they have fully implemented RtI with fidelity in one or more of the following domain areas - reading, writing, math, behavior, or science.

Across all grade levels, reading remains the predominant domain area for which RtI has been implemented followed by math and then behavior intervention. When examined on the national level in the survey, the staffing question of who is leading RtI implementation indicates that for the majority (57%) it is a unified effort equally involving both general and special education, general education leads RtI implementation for 24% of the respondents, and special education leads implementation for the remaining 19% of respondents.<sup>v</sup> (*Chart 1 below*)

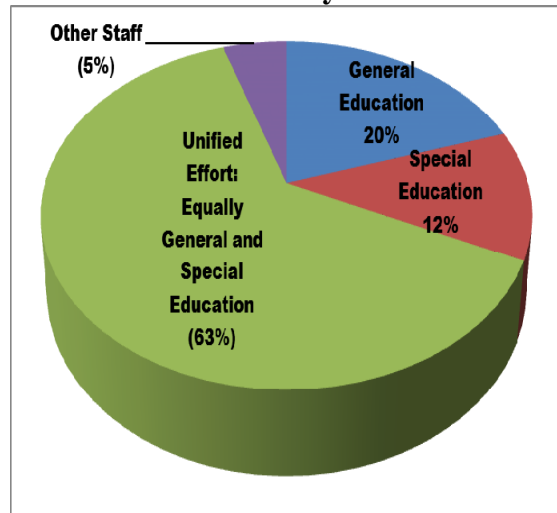
Preliminary results from the California statewide survey suggests a similar breakdown in staff leading implementation of these instructional approach models in California with 63% reporting a collaborative effort, general education at 20%, special education at 12%, and an additional 5% by other staff such as Education Psychologists or Administrators. (*Chart 2 below*)

## Who Leads Implementation of RtI and MTSS Models?

**Chart 1: National Survey Data**



**Chart 2: California Survey Data**



In California, Response to Intervention has been defined by CDE as Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) to emphasize the full spectrum of instruction, from general or core to intensive, to meet the academic and behavioral needs of students. The following information on the philosophy, definition and core components of RtI<sup>2</sup> for guidance to California schools comes from the California Department of Education's web page (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/>). It is important to note that this information is provided by CDE for districts and local education agencies (LEAs) as guidance and for technical assistance not as part of a mandated or regulated state "program". LEAs have local level control over whether or not to implement these instructional approach models as well as in determining the local level design and implementation.

### ***Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) Definition***

In California, RtI<sup>2</sup> is a systematic, data-driven approach to instruction that benefits every student. RtI<sup>2</sup> integrates resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education through a comprehensive system of core instruction and tiered levels of interventions to benefit every student. The CDE work group expanded the notion of RtI to RtI<sup>2</sup>, Instruction and Intervention, to emphasize the full spectrum of instruction, from general to intensive.<sup>vi</sup>

### ***Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) Philosophy***

Of the many solution strategies employed nationwide, RtI<sup>2</sup> is an approach with evidence of success with creating the conditions necessary for closing the achievement gap and improving problem behaviors. The RtI<sup>2</sup> process focuses on individual students who are struggling and provides a vehicle for teamwork to strengthen their performances before educational problems increase in intensity. Leadership is critical to the implementation of RtI<sup>2</sup>. To be effective, RtI<sup>2</sup> must harness and coordinate the full resources of the school, district, and community. Administrators and their leadership teams, in collaboration with all teachers, have central roles in the planning, implementation, and

successful day-to-day use of the RtI<sup>2</sup> approach. Analysis of how students respond to instruction and interventions is an organizing principle for structures and programs that already exist in our schools. An education system implementing RtI<sup>2</sup> promotes collaboration and shared responsibility for the learning of all students across all personnel, programs, and parent inclusion processes located in any given school. Further, data gathered from RtI<sup>2</sup> can be utilized in the identification process to determine if a student requires special education services.

California's RtI<sup>2</sup> framework, supported by national research and in accordance with federal law, emphasizes effective instruction and earlier intervention for students experiencing difficulty learning to ensure that they are not misdiagnosed or over identified for special education services due to lack of appropriate instruction.<sup>vii</sup>

CDE has identified ten core components to a strong RtI<sup>2</sup> approach (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rticorecomponents.asp>). A cohesive RtI<sup>2</sup> process integrates resources from general education, categorical programs and special education into a comprehensive system of core instruction and interventions to benefit every student. The following core components are critical to the full implementation of a strong RtI<sup>2</sup> process.<sup>viii</sup> These ten core components are also provided with more descriptive detail in *Appendix A*.

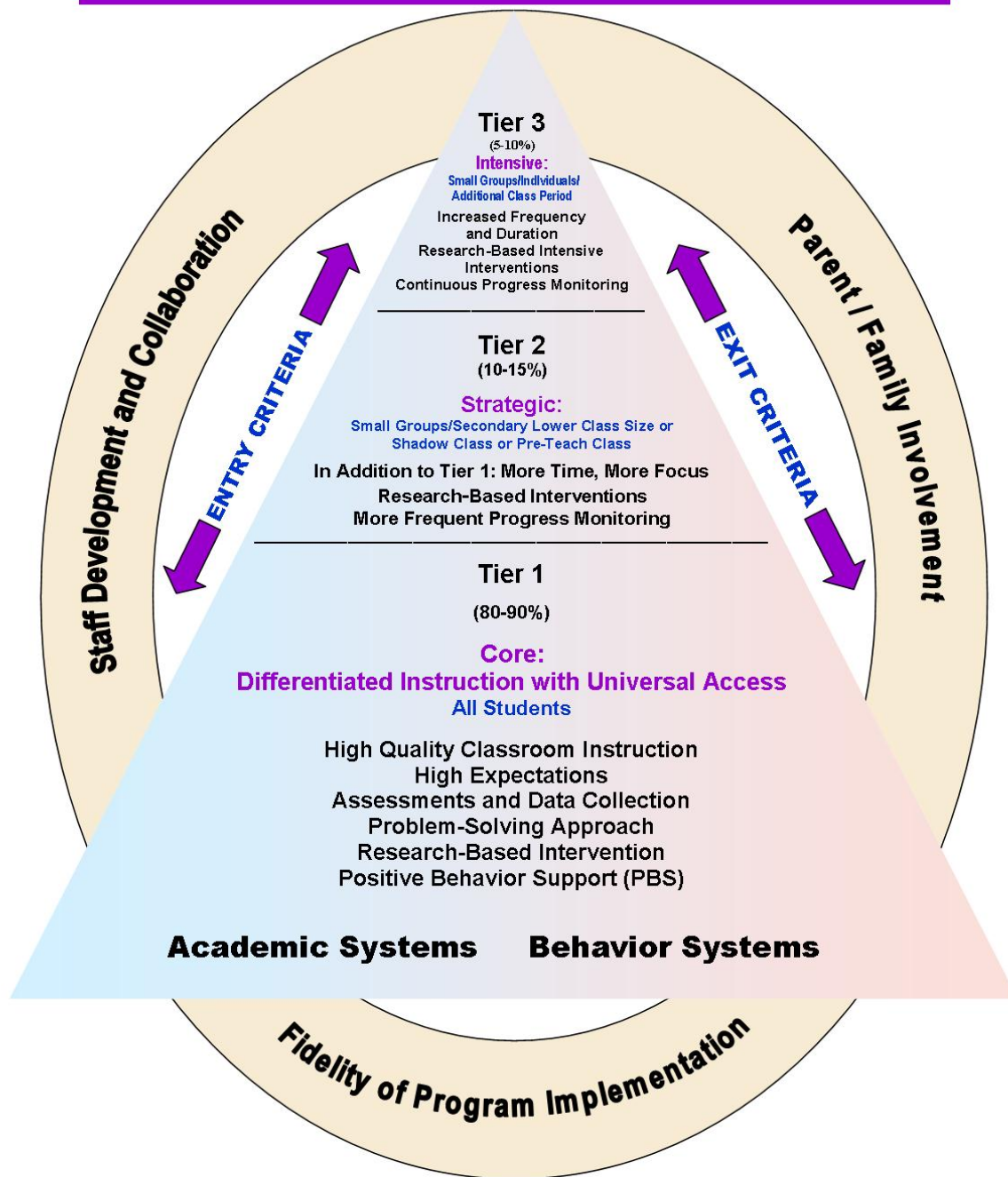
1. High-quality classroom instruction
2. High expectations
3. Assessments and data collection
4. Problem-solving systems approach
5. Research-based interventions
6. Positive behavioral support
7. Fidelity of program implementation.
8. Staff development and collaboration
9. Parent/ family involvement
10. Specific Learning Disability Determination

According to the CDE Implementation Support and Technical Assistance Guide (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/documents/rti2techassist.doc>), California developed the concept of RtI<sup>2</sup> to emphasize the importance of effective teaching and learning in the core general education classes. The Ten Core Components are based on California's belief that quality Tier 1 core instruction, or "first teaching," builds a foundation of success for every student.

*A special feature of California's RtI<sup>2</sup> framework is the recognition that both behavioral and academic systems are needed to support success for every elementary through grade twelve student. Each system is represented as one half of the pyramid in the graphic representation of California's RtI<sup>2</sup> Three Tiered Framework (Figure 1), and each system addresses the differentiated support students receive at each tier.<sup>ix</sup>*

Figure 1: California's Response to Instruction and Intervention Multi-tiered Framework

**California's Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>)  
Multi-tiered Framework: A Collaborative and Responsive System  
to Support Success for Every Kindergarten-12th Grade Student**



Response to Instruction and Intervention

### ***Description of California's RtI2 Multi-tiered Framework***

According to the CDE Technical Assistance Guide (), California's RtI<sup>2</sup> Framework is one of prevention, intervention, and enrichment. A three-tiered framework is used for explanation purposes. However, depending on the specific needs of individual schools, some California districts may have additional tiers in their model, which is one reason why some LEAs refer to their instructional approach model by the more recent terminology of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) rather than RtI<sup>2</sup>. A brief description of the three tiers described within the CDE Technical assistance guide is provided below for reference.

The three tiers of increasingly intense intervention are provided for a diminishing number of students for longer amounts of time in California's RtI<sup>2</sup>. The three-tiered Framework can be thought of as a continuum of services, both academic and behavioral, with each tier part of an interrelated process. Instructional practices are evaluated and adjusted based on results of frequent, valid, and sensitive indicators of student outcomes. While Tier 1 core high quality instruction is the foundation for the pyramid, each tier is critical to the overall success of the RtI<sup>2</sup> framework. The following provides descriptions of ideal RtI2 implementation in the three tiers.

#### ***Tier 1: Core/Universal Instruction***

Tier 1 core/universal instruction, also known as "first teaching," is differentiated instruction delivered to all students in general education. The goal is for all students to receive high quality standards-based instruction, with culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum, which meets the full range of student needs, from intervention to enrichment. Ideally, scientifically validated curriculum is sought and taught. Resources and training have been provided to teachers that enable them to deliver the core curriculum with depth, breadth, and fidelity. Valid universal screenings that identify students at risk of academic and behavioral failures are reliably administered to help ensure classroom-level interventions allow all students to benefit from core instruction. In Tier 1, it is expected that 80 percent of the students will make acceptable academic progress in relation to desired benchmarks and demonstrate social competence.

#### ***Tier 2: Strategic Targeted Instruction***

Tier 2 is strategic/targeted instruction for students who are not progressing or responding to Tier 1 efforts as expected. At the elementary level, targeted instruction could be delivered daily for thirty minutes in small groups for six to eight weeks. At the secondary level, Tier 2 support could include a course with fewer students where on a daily basis students are pre-taught, or retaught concepts taught in the core instruction. This second partner class that supports instruction in the core class is often referred to as a shadow class. The shadow class is most often a complete quarter or semester in duration, depending upon the flexibility of the master schedule. In both elementary and secondary settings, targeted students are provided with more time and more focused instruction directed to specific learning needs with more frequent monitoring of the student's progress toward identified goals. Tier 2 instructional supports are provided to students in addition to what they receive in Tier 1. The supplemental instruction provided in Tier 2 can be an extension of the core curriculum utilized in Tier 1 or may include instruction and materials specifically designed for intervention. Students in need of behavioral intervention could receive a variety of



behavioral supports provided by the teacher in the classroom, counseling staff, or other trained adults on campus as recommended by the problem-solving team.

***Tier 3: Intensive Instruction with Continuous Progress Monitoring***

Tier 3 consists of intensive intervention instruction with continuous progress monitoring for approximately five to ten percent of the students. These are students who have difficulties with the established grade-level standards in the general education curriculum or who demonstrate significant difficulties with behavioral and social competence. These interventions are often provided as a replacement to the core curriculum and may occur in a learning center setting.

At grades four and above, problem-solving teams may determine that the student's needs are best met in a replacement core intervention program. The same problem-solving team may determine that students stay in the core curriculum with more frequent, longer duration, and smaller group intensive intervention instruction. The instruction for elementary students in Tier 3 may be for forty to sixty minutes daily for a period of six to eight weeks.

For secondary students, Tier 3 intervention is most often a double block of daily instruction for a semester or longer. In both elementary and secondary settings, the instructional goal is to provide research-based intervention more often and for longer periods of time with reduced student/teacher ratios intended to accelerate students' progress and return them to their core instructional programs (Tier 1).

Students in need of Tier 3 behavioral intervention may receive individual and/or group counseling of more frequent and longer duration. Progress monitoring may need to occur daily to inform problem-solving teams, parents, and students of how successfully the student is replacing inappropriate behaviors with appropriate behaviors.<sup>x</sup>

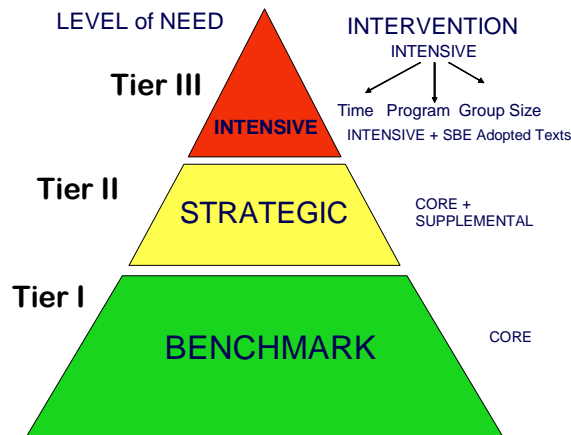
RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models are used as one tool for the identification of students with specific learning disabilities. These models are designed to support students in general education settings and are cited as highly successful in supporting struggling students in non-special education settings and in preventing the disproportional identification of students in certain racial and ethnic subgroups into special education. Discussions with school districts in California indicate that in some cases RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models have been implemented as part of their Program Improvement (PI) Plan.

In January 2011, Commission staff presented an Information agenda item (<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/commission/agendas/2011-01/2011-01-2E.pdf>) on the Implementation of RtI<sup>2</sup> in California in response to many questions and emails received from the field about the appropriate authorizations for individuals who teach in multi-tiered settings. Because of these requests for information and confusion in the field, staff began to communicate with the CDE staff, in both special education and general education, regarding California's approach to RtI<sup>2</sup> implementation. During 2012, that discussion has now broadened to include representatives from state (SELPA Directors, school districts, and West Ed which led to the development of the joint survey.



## Multi-Tiered Instruction

In all models, the tiers increase in intensity, strategies, and support if a student needs additional assistance. *Figure 2* provides a more simplistic and still commonly used tiered framework incorporating terminology used in program improvement efforts.<sup>xi</sup>



## Credentials that Authorize Instruction in Various Tiers of Locally Designed Models

CDE collaborated with staff at the Commission to develop a staffing brief for RtI<sup>2</sup> Interventions (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/documents/cdertibrief.doc>). This document provides clarification on some staffing issues LEAs often encounter when implementing an RtI<sup>2</sup> process while remaining compliant with federal and state laws and regulations. RtI<sup>2</sup> is designed so that students in Tier 1 receive high-quality core instruction. The more strategic, targeted, and intensive approaches, designed for smaller numbers of students, are implemented in the upper tiers of the RtI<sup>2</sup> process. District and site personnel may face some challenges when staffing for the delivery of intensive RtI<sup>2</sup> interventions but are required to ensure that the instructors who teach these interventions are appropriately prepared and authorized.

Prior to 1998, when the Education Specialist Credential and new Program Standards were established, all individuals earning an authorization to teach students with special needs were required to also hold a general education teaching credential and therefore often had teaching experience prior to beginning the preparation program to earn the Ryan Specialist Credential. Since the Education Specialist Credential does not require a prerequisite general education teaching credential, it is considered a basic teaching credential. It does not authorize providing instructional services to general education students.

Student populations, settings and grade levels are also essential considerations. It is a statutory requirement that an individual must hold a credential or authorization appropriate to the assignment or be otherwise legally authorized to serve on the basis of a local assignment option in statute or regulations, prior to providing services or instruction. Additionally, LEAs must meet the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements for areas of core academic instruction which include reading to ensure that students are instructed by highly qualified teachers in the subject matter being taught.<sup>xii</sup>

A key consideration when making staffing decisions is: ***Instruction must be designed and implemented by appropriately prepared and authorized teachers or co-teachers for the subject(s) in which they are providing instruction.***

It is not the RtI<sup>2</sup> Tier that determines what authorization a teacher must hold, but the population of students the individual is teaching as well as the setting, duration, academic content, and grade levels served within each locally designed model. For students in general education, the teacher must hold a multiple subject or single subject teaching credential, or the equivalent. If the class is part of a departmentalized program (i.e., mathematics or history), the teacher should hold the appropriate single subject credential, or the equivalent, and if the class is a core setting at the middle school where the same students have two or more subjects together with the same teacher, the teacher should hold a multiple subject credential, or the equivalent.

If one or more of the students is identified as a student with special needs, a student with an IEP, and the most appropriate placement is in a special education setting, the teacher must hold an Education Specialist Teaching Credential, or the equivalent, to provide the special education instructional services identified within the Individual Education Program (IEP) for each student. The credential context is even more complicated because the teacher must hold an Education Specialist Teaching Credential which authorizes the teacher to provide instructional services to students in the specific identified disability category of the student(s).

As California school districts have implemented RtI<sup>2</sup> there are reports from districts that staffing in various Tier II settings is a barrier to implementation of some locally designed models. As Commission staff has worked with employers and SELPA directors, it has come to light that there are a wide variety of locally designed and implemented models in California. For example, in many models both general and special education students are served together within Tier II and sometimes Tier III. In addition, the types of interventions provided vary widely between short-term six week intensive interventions focused on strategies to a full two year course of instruction in reading intervention. In between those two extremes are many variations including learning center models, semester or year-long courses focused on academic content-based remediation, and plans that focus solely on behavior intervention models. If the individual holds only the Education Specialist Instruction Credential, he or she is not authorized on the basis of their credential to teach general education students.

Each of California's school districts decides if and how to implement RtI<sup>2</sup> independently, considering the guidance provided by CDE. If a school district has teachers who received their special education teaching credential prior to 1998, the teacher most likely also holds a general education teaching credential. An individual holding both the general education and special education teaching credential would be an appropriate individual to provide instruction in Tier II settings that include both general education and special education students in the class as long as one of the credentials authorizes the content, setting and grade level of the class.

For individuals who hold special education teaching credentials earned following the changes in structure in 1998, the credential may be the individual's only teaching credential. If the teacher in the Tier II setting holds an Education Specialist Teaching Credential but does not hold an additional general education teaching credential, he or she is not authorized to teach general education students in the Tier II setting on the basis of the special education credential.

Due to the complexity of credentialing issues related to implementation of RtI<sup>2</sup> the Certification Division typically receives questions such as the following:

1. “Can an individual holding an Education Specialist Mild/Moderate credential serving as the Resource Specialist (RSP) teacher provide instruction in a general education intervention class?”
2. “Can an individual holding an Education Specialist Mild/Moderate credential teach an elective course for general education students?”
3. “As I understand the school site plan, it is to assign special and general education students to the same class which is taught by a teacher with a special education credential. The teacher in question does not also possess a general education credential. Is this an acceptable assignment?”

Based on correspondence to the Certification Division and questions asked at the annual Credential Counselors and Analysts of California (CCAC) conference and other workshops, staff recognizes that there remains confusion in the field related to the appropriate assignments for multi-tiered settings and has provided guidance on current legal options for providing service in the variety of models that have been submitted to us as outlined below.

#### ***Current Guidance for Staffing Options for RtI<sup>2</sup>/MTSS Instructional Approach Models***

Each local education agency develops its own RtI<sup>2</sup> or MTSS instructional approach model based on research-based practices. Those models vary across the state and in some cases these models may differ when implemented at the elementary and secondary levels. Model variations include the content, setting, duration and staffing of the interventions within the various tiers.

Education Code (EC) §44225 states, among other responsibilities, that the Commission determines the scope and authorization of credentials and establishes sanctions for the misuse of credentials and the misassignment of credential holders. EC §44203(d) defines “Authorization” as the designation on a document that identifies the subjects and circumstances in which the holder may teach or render service. The Education Specialist Credential authorizes instruction to students identified through a valid IEP as needing instruction and services for specified federal special education disability areas. If an individual holds an Education Specialist Credential and does not also hold a multiple or single subject teaching credential, the individual is not authorized to independently teach general education students in a self-contained or departmentalized setting.

In relation to appropriate authorization and assignment, there are a variety of staffing options available to provide flexibility for the implementation of the multi-tiered intervention models uniquely developed at the local level as outlined below.

*Collaboration (consultative content teaching, cooperative teaching)* is a model where general or special education teachers visit the general education classroom and provide re-teaching and supportive strategies during regular classroom instructional time for the subject. These interventions include collaboration with the general education teacher of record and do not require the special education teacher to have an authorization to teach general education students.

*Co-Teaching (shared instructional responsibility, team teaching)* is a classroom partnership or learning center model including both special education and general education credentialed teachers in order to meet the instructional needs of all students. These teachers combine their expertise and share responsibility in providing the instruction in a classroom or learning center with both general and special education students. The teachers have joint and equal responsibility for classroom instruction, planning and assessment. As this team of teachers carries a combination of authorizations for all of the students they jointly serve as the teachers of record, the special education teacher in this model would not need to hold an additional credential authorization to teach general education students.

*Local Assignment Options* - California has provisions within the Education Code that provide avenues for the assignment of certificated employees outside their basic credential authorization. These Education Code options provide school districts with local level flexibility for staffing. Teachers must consent to an assignment outside of the authorized area on their document and most local teaching assignment options require annual approval of the local governing board.

*Content Based Interventions* -

The school district may determine to use Local Assignment Options to legally authorize the assignment for teachers that do not fit into the other models or staffing options provided above; for example, special education teachers without dual credentials serving as the teacher of record for a quarter, semester, trimester, or year-long departmentalized intervention class in reading, language arts or mathematics to general education students or a general education teacher assigned to a departmentalized intervention class in a content area that they are not authorized to teach. Two of the most common options that provide the most flexibility on the type of credential held are provided below.

**§44258.3** allows local school districts to assign credentialed teachers to teach departmentalized classes in grades K-12 as long as the teacher's subject-matter competence is verified according to policy and procedures approved by the governing board.

**§44263** allows the credential holder to teach in a departmentalized class at any grade level if the teacher has completed eighteen semester units of course work, or nine semester units of upper division or graduate course work, in the subject to be taught.

*Study Skills/Strategies* - In some cases, we have heard from local education agencies that their multi-tiered intervention models do not include content instruction but rather focus on strategies and skills. There is a local assignment option available in Title 5 Regulations that could address this type of model. Subsection (b) of section 80005 contains an authorization for teachers to be broadly assigned to provide instruction in areas that do not fall within the statutory single subject content areas. These include courses in life skills, leadership, study skills, conflict management, teen skills, study hall, and others. Holders of a teaching credential based on a bachelor's degree and a teacher preparation program including student teaching, who has been determined to have the knowledge and skills in the subject

area, may serve in this type of assignment. Service is restricted to the grade level of the teaching credential. The language in this section of regulation does not preclude using a special education credential as the appropriate credential and may meet the needs of some multi-tiered intervention model settings.

### ***Additional Staffing Options for Reading Intervention Models***

When the intervention model involves pull-out instruction that replaces the reading content in the general education class or involves instruction in a separate departmentalized class then the following are provided as legally authorized assignment options.

1. Reading and Language Arts Specialist Teaching Credential
2. Reading Certificate
3. Restricted Reading Credential
4. Elementary Level Credentials - Multiple Subject, Standard Elementary, or General Elementary
5. A Dual Credentialed Teacher holds both special and general education teaching credentials (elementary level or Single Subject English). All teachers that earned the Ryan Specialist Credential in Special Education (initially issued 1976–1997) were required to also hold a general education teaching credential. Current Education Specialist Credential holders also have the option of holding dual credentials and there are currently dual credential programs offered.
6. Local Assignment Options–See information above concerning content based interventions

### ***Educator Excellence Task Force (EETF) Recommendations***

In the EETF report, *Greatness by Design* released in September 2012 there is discussion on the issue of special education teachers in relation to serving general education students and identifies that a common set of standards should prepare all educators in these instructional approach models.

The gaps in preparation for Special Educators (Education Specialists) are perhaps even more unsettling. The role of the Education Specialist is not well defined in California relative to meeting the needs of students who have the most complex disabilities and learning needs. Unlike many other states, Education Specialists in California are not required to have a general education credential prior to obtaining an Education Specialist credential.

At the same time, Education Specialists are not authorized to teach students who do not have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (i.e., typically developing students) if they do not hold a multiple subjects or single subject credential.

To address these problems, preparation should be restructured in the following ways:

- All educators (general educators, special educators and bilingual educators) should share a common base of preparation in general education by completing a common

set of courses based on a common set of standards prior to specializing. This common base could be started in the undergraduate years to streamline the process.

- The common set of standards should prepare all educators to work collaboratively as part of an instructional team, to co-teach with other educators and to be able to effectively implement instructional approaches, such as differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, positive behavior support, progress monitoring and Response to Intervention.<sup>xiii</sup>

The report also provides the recommendation that the preparation of Education Specialists should be advanced preparation based on the common foundation in general education for all initial candidates that should include depth of knowledge in reading intervention and RtI models. In Chapter 3 of the Greatness by Design report, recommendation E3 specifies that preparation for current Education Specialists who do not now have a multiple or single subject credential should be provided so that they are qualified to teach typically developing students. This preparation should be streamlined and focused on the required standards and field experience so that they can complete this preparation effectively and efficiently.<sup>xiv</sup>

### ***Policy Questions for Discussion and Direction***

The following questions are posed as a framework for the Commission's discussion of the effects of the locally designed RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS approach models on credentialing structure, preparation and authorization issues. *In providing the questions below, staff suggests that the Commission consider three issues – serving the needs of the current student population, addressing future preparation to meet student needs if gaps are determined, and if gaps are identified for the current Education Specialist addressing options for those individuals already holding credentials:*

1. As districts identify the most appropriate teacher for a Tier II or Tier III setting, is the current guidance regarding appropriate authorizations and local assignment options suitable and sufficient for addressing the needs of both the LEAs and the student populations being served in these models?
2. Should current standards for the Education Specialist Instruction credential be examined to determine if the candidates are provided adequate preparation to serve general education students in RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS instructional approach models?
3. In some locally designed models the educator provides short-term targeted intervention strategies focused on skills while in other models the educator may serve in a content based year-long course of additional instruction and intervention. If interventions are identified as intensive, short-term, targeted strategies rather than content based instruction in a departmentalized classroom should there be distinctions between the individuals authorized to serve?
4. If preparation for the Education Specialist teacher is not sufficient for instruction of general education students in the multi-tiered models:
  - a. Would there be interest in developing a limited general education Added Authorization for individuals holding an Education Specialist Teaching



Credential, or the equivalent, that would authorize teaching general education students in RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models?

- b. Would there be interest in developing a limited special education Added Authorization for individuals holding a general education teaching credential that would authorize teaching special education students in these RtI<sup>2</sup> and MTSS models?
- c. Would there be interest in examining the initial preparation and structure of the Education Specialist Credential to meet the needs of the student population served in these models?
- d. As recommended in the *Greatness by Design* report, would there be interest in reestablishing the Education Specialist as an advanced credential that requires a prerequisite general education credential or a concurrent preparation program to be eligible?

### **Recommended Action**

Based on Commission discussion and direction, additional agenda items could be prepared related to these policy questions for future consideration.

## Appendix A

The California Department of Education has identified ten core components to a strong RtI<sup>2</sup> approach (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rticorecomponents.asp>). A cohesive RtI<sup>2</sup> process integrates resources from general education, categorical programs and special education into a comprehensive system of core instruction and interventions to benefit every student. The following core components are critical to the full implementation of a strong RtI<sup>2</sup> process.

1. **High-quality classroom instruction.** Students receive high-quality, standards and research-based, culturally and linguistically relevant instruction in their classroom setting by highly qualified teachers.
2. **High expectations.** A belief that every student can learn including students of poverty, students with disabilities, English learners, and students representing all ethnicities are evident in the school and district cultures.
3. **Assessments and data collection.** An Integrated data collection and assessment system includes universal screening, diagnostics and progress monitoring to inform decisions appropriate for each tier of service delivery.
4. **Problem-solving systems approach.** Collaborative teams use a problem-solving systems process and method to identify problems, develop interventions and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in a multi-tiered system of service delivery.
5. **Research-based interventions.** When monitoring data indicate a lack of progress, an appropriate research-based intervention is implemented. The interventions are designed to increase the intensity of the students' instructional experience.
6. **Positive behavioral support.** School staff members use school wide and classroom research-based positive behavioral supports for achieving important social and learning outcomes.
7. **Fidelity of program implementation.** Student success in the RtI<sup>2</sup> framework requires fidelity of implementation in the delivery of content and instructional strategies specific to the learning and/or behavioral needs of the student.
8. **Staff development and collaboration.** All school staff members are trained in assessments, data analysis, programs, and research-based instructional practices and positive behavioral support. Site grade level or interdisciplinary teams use a collaborative approach to analyze student data and work together in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the intervention process.
9. **Parent/ family involvement.** The involvement and active participation of parents/families at all stages of the instructional and intervention process are essential to improving the educational outcomes of their students. Parents/families are kept informed of the progress of their students in their native language or other mode of communication, and their input is valued in making appropriate decisions.
10. **Specific Learning Disability Determination.** The RtI<sup>2</sup> approach may be one component of Specific Learning Disability determination as addressed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 statute and regulations. As part of determining eligibility, the data from the RtI<sup>2</sup> process may be used to ensure that a student has received research-based instruction and interventions.<sup>xv</sup>

## End Notes

---

<sup>i</sup> Commission on Teacher Credentialing, *Foundations of Special Education Certification in California*, Retrieved on November 26, 2012 from <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/live.html> under 'Recent Video Broadcasts' dated November 20, 2012.

<sup>ii</sup> RTI Action Network is a program of the National Center for Learning Disabilities, funded by the Cisco Foundation , *RTI Definition*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what>

<sup>iii</sup> National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY), *Response to Intervention (RTI)*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://nichcy.org/schools-administrators/rti#what>

<sup>iv</sup> Ventura County Office of Education in Partnership with the California Department of Education, *Response to Instruction and Intervention RtI<sup>2</sup>: An Implementation and Technical Assistance Guide for Districts and Schools (2011)*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/documents/rti2techassist.doc>

<sup>v</sup> GlobalScholar/Spectrum K12, AASA, CASE, NASDSE, & RTI Action Network/NCLD. (2011). *Response to Intervention (RTI) Adoption Survey 2011*. Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from [www.spectrumk12.com/rti/the\\_rti\\_corner/rti\\_adoption\\_report](http://www.spectrumk12.com/rti/the_rti_corner/rti_adoption_report)

<sup>vi</sup> California Department of Education, *California Philosophy & Definition-RtI<sup>2</sup>*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rtiphilosophydefine.asp>

<sup>vii</sup> California Department of Education, *California Philosophy & Definition-RtI<sup>2</sup>*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rtiphilosophydefine.asp>

<sup>viii</sup> California Department of Education, *Core Components-RtI<sup>2</sup>*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rticorecomponents.asp>

<sup>ix</sup> Ventura County Office of Education in Partnership with the California Department of Education, *Response to Instruction and Intervention RtI<sup>2</sup>: An Implementation and Technical Assistance Guide for Districts and Schools (2011)*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/documents/rti2techassist.doc>

<sup>x</sup> Ventura County Office of Education in Partnership with the California Department of Education, *Response to Instruction and Intervention RtI<sup>2</sup>: An Implementation and Technical Assistance Guide for Districts and Schools (2011)*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/documents/rti2techassist.doc>

<sup>xi</sup> California Department of Education, *Determining Specific Learning Disability Eligibility using RtI<sup>2</sup>*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/documents/sldeligibiltyrti2.pdf>

---

<sup>xii</sup> California Department of Education, *Brief: Staffing for RtI<sup>2</sup> Academic Interventions*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/documents/cdertibrief.doc>

<sup>xiii</sup> State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson appointed an Educator Excellence Task Force, a joint effort between the California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, produced a report - *Greatness by Design: Supporting Outstanding Teaching to Sustain a Golden State* (Updated 17-Sept-2012), Retrieved on November 15, 2012, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/greatnessfinal.pdf>

<sup>xiv</sup> State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson appointed an Educator Excellence Task Force, a joint effort between the California Department of Education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, produced a report - *Greatness by Design: Supporting Outstanding Teaching to Sustain a Golden State* (Updated 17-Sept-2012), Retrieved on November 15, 2012, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/documents/greatnessfinal.pdf>

<sup>xv</sup> California Department of Education, *Core Components-RtI<sup>2</sup>*, Retrieved on November 15, 2012 from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rticorecomponents.asp>